United Nations S/PV.4334

Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

Provisional

4334th meeting

Thursday, 21 June 2001, 10.25 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Azad	(Bangladesh)
Members:	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Franco
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Mali	Mr. Kasse
	Mauritius	Mr. Neewoor
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Singapore	Ms. Lee
	Tunisia	Mr. Jerandi
	Ukraine	Mr. Kuchinsky
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

Role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts

Report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict (S/2001/574).

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01-42053 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts

Report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict (S/2001/574)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Argentina, Belarus, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, South Africa and Sweden in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President Mr. Listre (Argentina), Mr. Laptenok (Belarus), Mr. Fonseca (Brazil), Mr. Duval (Canada), Mr. Niehaus (Costa Rica), Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt), Mr. Pal (India) Mr. Widodo (Indonesia), Mr. Al-Douri (Iraq), Mr. Aekasaka (Japan), Mr. Yahya (Malaysia), Mr. Navarrete (Mexico), Mr. Apata (Nigeria), Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan), Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea), Mr. Nacerodien (South Africa) and Mr. Schori (Sweden) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict, document S/2001/574.

I will begin by paying tribute to my Jamaican colleague, Foreign Minister Paul Robertson, who presided over the Council debate on conflict prevention last July. The Jamaican delegation deserves our appreciation for its initiative in following up the issue in a substantive manner.

The report of the Secretary-General before us provides for the first time a substantive basis for our discussion on conflict prevention. The need for such a systematic approach has, however, long been felt. The Agenda for Peace placed emphasis on prevention. Our purpose today is to take the matter a decisive step forward. The consultative and forward-looking approach to the report and its recommendations by participants in today's debate will facilitate that process.

The General Assembly is expected to take up the report on 12 July. That will also provide the occasion for a more elaborate discussion. In our meeting today, I shall encourage speakers to focus on the recommendations, made specifically for action by the Security Council.

I give the floor to the Deputy Secretary-General, who will introduce the report of the Secretary-General.

The Deputy Secretary-General: Recent debates, including those at the Millennium Summit and the Security Council summit last September, have shown wide agreement on the need to make conflict prevention a central pillar of our collective security system in the twenty-first century. I therefore welcome this opportunity to present the first report on this subject, which the Secretary-General has submitted to both the Security Council and the General Assembly.

If this report has one message, it is that we must intensify our efforts to move from a culture of reaction to one of prevention. Drawing on the lessons we have learned, the Secretary-General proposes the following 10 principles which, in his view, should guide our future approach to conflict prevention.

First, conflict prevention is one of the primary obligations of Member States set forth in the Charter and our efforts in conflict prevention must be in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

Second, conflict prevention must begin with national Governments and local actors. Otherwise, it is unlikely to succeed. They have the primary responsibility. The United Nations and the international community should support their efforts and assist them in building national capacities.

Third, the most useful instruments of prevention are those described in Chapter VI of the Charter, which deals with the peaceful settlement of disputes. Measures under Chapter VII are normally taken only after a conflict has broken out, though they may still have a preventive effect by deterring other potential conflicts. There may also be cases where certain measures under Chapter VII, such as economic sanctions, can be used preventively.

Fourth, to be most effective, preventive actions should be initiated as early as possible. The sooner a dispute or problem that might lead to conflict can be identified and addressed successfully, the less likely it is that it will deteriorate into violent conflict.

Fifth, the primary focus of prevention should be the multidimensional root causes of conflict. The proximate cause of conflict may be an outbreak of public disorder or a protest over a particular incident, but the root causes are more likely to be found in socio-economic inequities, systematic ethnic discrimination, denial of human rights, disputes over political participation or longstanding grievances over the allocation of land, water and other resources.

Sixth, an effective preventive strategy requires a comprehensive approach that encompasses both short-term and long-term political, development, humanitarian and human rights programmes.

Seventh, conflict prevention and sustainable development reinforce each other. An investment in prevention should be seen as a simultaneous investment in sustainable development, since it is obvious that the latter is more likely to happen in a peaceful environment.

Eighth, there is therefore a case for looking at United Nations development programmes and activities from a conflict-prevention perspective. This in turn requires greater coherence and coordination in the United Nations system, with a specific focus on conflict prevention.

Ninth, the United Nations is not the only actor in prevention and may not always be the actor best suited to take the lead. Member States, international and regional organizations, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other civil society actors also have very important roles to play.

Tenth and finally, effective preventive action by the United Nations requires sustained political will on the part of Member States. This includes, first and foremost, a readiness to provide the United Nations with the necessary political support and resources for undertaking effective preventive action and developing its institutional capacity in this field.

Now, how can this Council, which has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, enhance its role in conflict prevention? The Secretary-General proposes a number of means to help identify and capitalize more easily on windows of opportunity for preventive action. One is the practice, which the Secretary-General intends to initiate, of providing periodic regional or subregional reports to the Council on disputes with a potential to threaten international peace and security. Another is the proposition that the Council consider the establishment of new mechanisms, such as an ad hoc informal working group, another subsidiary organ or some other informal technical arrangement for discussing prevention cases in a more sustained and structured way. The Council may also wish to consider sending fact-finding missions with multidisciplinary expert support to potential conflict areas, with the aim of working out comprehensive prevention strategies.

The report calls on the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to play a more active role in conflict prevention and to enhance their interaction with the Security Council in this field. One of the recommendations made to the General Assembly is that it authorize the Secretary-General and other United Nations organs to take advantage of the advisory competence of the International Court of Justice. Needless to say, Member States themselves are also urged to resort to the Court earlier and more often to settle their disputes.

As to his own preventive role, the Secretary-General thinks that it could be enhanced by increasing the use of interdisciplinary fact-finding and confidence-building missions to volatile areas; by developing regional prevention strategies with regional partners and the relevant United Nations organs and agencies; by establishing an informal network of eminent persons; and by improving the capacity and resource base for preventive action in the Secretariat.

I would like to draw the Council's attention to two other recommendations in the report. One is that Member States support the follow-up processes launched by the last two high-level meetings between

the United Nations and regional organizations, which dealt with conflict prevention and peace-building, respectively, and provide increased resources for the development of regional capacities in these fields.

The other is that donor States should increase the flow of official development assistance, which has dropped to alarmingly low levels in recent years. Development assistance cannot by itself prevent or end conflict, but it does facilitate the creation of opportunities and the political, economic and social environment within which national actors can build a peaceful, equitable and just society.

All that being said, let me emphasize that effective conflict prevention requires action beyond what is recommended in this report and, indeed, beyond any institutional mechanism. The international community has a moral responsibility to ensure that vulnerable peoples are protected. On at least two occasions in the recent past, in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, we failed to live up to this responsibility.

The question remains, why is effective conflict prevention still so seldom practised, and why do we so often fail when there is a clear potential for a preventive strategy to succeed? Past experience offers two main answers to this question. First, if the Government concerned refuses to admit that it has a problem which could lead to violent conflict and rejects offers of assistance, there often is very little that outside actors, including the United Nations, can do. Secondly, the international community, including the Security Council and the Member States of the United Nations, all too often lacks the political will to take effective action in time.

But such attitudes are not the only obstacle to effective preventive action. No less significant are the ways in which the Member States define their national interests in any given crisis. As the world has changed in profound ways since the end of the cold war, our conceptions of national interest have failed to follow suit. A new, broader, more widely conceived definition of national interest in the new century would induce States to find far greater unity in the pursuit of the fundamental goals of the Charter. As the Secretary-General has stressed, in the growing number of challenges facing humanity, the collective interest is the national interest.

Preventive strategies are not easy to implement. The costs of prevention have to be paid in the present, while its benefits lie in the future. In addition, the benefits are often not tangible. When prevention succeeds, little happens that is visible. Yet the report clearly demonstrates that conflict prevention is the most desirable and cost-effective approach for promoting the peaceful and just international order envisaged in the Charter.

According to a study by the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, the international community spent about $200 billion on the seven major interventions of the 1990s — in Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti, the Persian Gulf, Cambodia and El Salvador, exclusive of Kosovo and East Timor. Such calculations do not, of course, reflect the human costs of war — death, injury, destruction, displacement, and their repercussions for families, communities, local and national institutions and economies, and neighbouring countries.

The message is clear: Governments which peacefully resolve a situation that might deteriorate into a violent conflict and call for preventive assistance as soon as it is needed provide the best protection for their citizens against unwelcome outside interference. Used in this way, international preventive action can significantly strengthen the capacity of Member States to preserve and exercise their national sovereignty.

It is my hope and the Secretary-General's hope that the United Nations system and Member States will be able to work together towards the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report. The constructive stance that the Security Council has already taken in the three open debates and subsequent presidential statements on this subject over the past two years is heartening. But the time has come to translate the rhetoric of conflict prevention into concrete action.

The President: I shall now give the floor to the members of the Council.

Mr. Franco (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to welcome you very warmly, Mr. President. We are honoured that you, as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, should be presiding over this important meeting of the Security Council today. Your presence lends even greater distinction to the magnificent work that has been carried out by Bangladesh this month during its presidency of the Council. We are also grateful to the Deputy Secretary-General for her presentation of the Secretary-General's

report now under consideration, which contains various recommendations on conflict prevention. We hope that this debate will contribute, as we all aspire, to the crafting of a culture of conflict prevention within the United Nations system and in particular among the Member States of the Organization.

Conflict prevention covers many human activities. It involves many actors and institutions working with diverse mandates. The proposals made by the Secretary-General place this topic at the core of our concerns and strengthen the original mission of the United Nations, which is to promote peace in the world. From that perspective, conflict prevention entails an ethical, political and social commitment on the part of our leaders.

In a number of its Articles, the Charter is eloquent on collective measures to prevent threats to peace, in particular in Chapter 6, to which the Deputy Secretary-General has referred. I believe that we should also take into consideration, for our future discussions, a recent document prepared by the Secretariat concerning mechanisms established by the General Assembly in the context of the prevention and settlement of disputes, which was presented to the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization last year.

Allow me to put forward my delegation's considerations on some of the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report, in particular those that relate directly to the Security Council.

My first point has to do with the relationship among the principal organs of the United Nations. A distinction is usually drawn between short- and long-term measures in conflict prevention. In our opinion, the organs of the United Nations should keep both types of measures in their sights. We believe, however, that long-term measures are more suitable for effective interaction among the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and that they should serve as the starting point for collective consideration. I am thinking in particular of the post-conflict reconstruction of societies, where robust disarmament demobilization and reintegration programmes and the inclusion of a civilian component in peacekeeping missions could serve to expand the area of interaction of these United Nations organs. We are gratified to see that the General Assembly has scheduled for July a debate on conflict prevention. As for the Economic and Social Council, we support the Secretary-General's proposal that it should devote a high-level segment of its regular session to this topic. Such debates will contribute to increasing the degree of responsibility of each of the Members of the United Nations vis-à-vis preventive measures.

Our second point relates to the role played by the Secretary-General. Short-term measures such as preventive diplomacy, fact-finding missions and reports on regional situations all provide fertile ground for the relationship between the Security Council and the Secretariat. We would like to highlight the Secretary-General's intention to provide the Council with periodic regional reports on conflict situations. We believe these reports can be useful if they correspond to strategies for prevention in particularly vulnerable regions. We would like to highlight, in particular, the inter-agency mission that was sent in March to West Africa. In our opinion, that mission could serve as a model for a regional or subregional approach to prevention in order to tackle other situations on that continent in collaboration with the Organization of African Unity and other, subregional organizations.

My delegation considers that the mission's report was not widely examined by the Security Council; it should be studied in greater depth with a view to promoting and reinforcing the dialogue that the Security Council has been holding for some time with the members of the Economic Community of West African States.

My third point concerns Security Council peace missions for the prevention of conflicts. The Security Council has been using such missions to provide orientation for efforts to bring about peace in conflict situations or to contribute to the restoration of peace in post-conflict situations. Their use in conflict prevention, as proposed by the Secretary-General, would necessitate a clarification of this objective in the terms of reference of a mission, and perhaps new financial arrangements supporting such missions. Some United Nations agencies have established what seems like a suitable system for funding the costs of missions that hinges on the income level of the participating countries.

Finally, our fourth point concerns arrangements within the Security Council to consider situations

where conflict prevention is at issue. The Secretary-General proposes to the Council the creation of a subsidiary organ, an informal working group or some other mechanism to consider preventive measures in specific situations. In order to be informed about these matters, the Security Council today relies on presentations made by the Secretary-General or his representatives or on the discretionary power of Members of the Organization to bring to the attention of the Security Council possible threats to peace. We should explore more carefully the feasibility of taking to the expert level the discussion of a topic that is essentially a political one.

One of the main purposes of this discussion, as we have said, is to encourage a culture of prevention. Just as different human communities respond to natural risks by adopting disaster prevention strategies, they should be keenly aware of the underlying tensions that threaten peace and should establish mechanisms to prevent conflict. The roots of each nation's reality could enable the United Nations to successfully promote the collective interest of a culture of prevention. This is why we have taken note with great interest of the 10 principles enshrined in paragraph 169, which in the opinion of the Secretary-General should guide the United Nations in this era. We agree with him that perhaps the time has come to adopt a solid declaration of principles to guide the United Nations and its Member States in consolidating a culture of prevention.

The President: I thank the representative of Colombia for his kind words addressed to me.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): It is a pleasure to see you, Sir, the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, presiding over the deliberations of the Security Council. Your presence here today clearly reflects the commitment of Bangladesh to inculcating a culture of peace and non-violence in international affairs. I also wish to thank you for the kind words addressed to my country, Jamaica, and to our Foreign Minister, The Honourable Mr. Paul Robertson.

Allow me to also express my delegation's appreciation to Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette for her important statement and her introduction of the report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict.

We welcome this comprehensive response to the discussions held last July, during Jamaica's presidency, in which the Security Council reviewed the complex dimensions of the causes and prevention of armed conflicts and which led to the adoption of the presidential statement inviting the Secretary-General to submit a report containing an analysis and recommendations on initiatives within the United Nations.

The Secretary-General's own commitment to promoting a culture of prevention within the United Nations system and among Member States is clearly borne out in his report. The report not only highlights the roles of the key players in conflict prevention within the United Nations system, in particular those of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Secretary-General, and United Nations funds and programmes, as well as the Bretton Woods institutions, but also appropriately identifies the important and indispensable roles of national Governments, international, regional and subregional organizations, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other civil society actors. The report provides analyses and recommendations that should guide the Security Council in carrying out its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Secretary-General's report upholds the principle that being proactive in dealing with potential conflicts rather than responding to conflicts after they have occurred is a core mandate of the United Nations, with the Security Council having a primary role.

On a number of occasions we have examined the root causes of deadly conflicts and how they ultimately manifest themselves in the outbreak of war, causing death, suffering and economic devastation. What we have not determined, however, are the means to engage the international community in meaningfully preventing these causes from turning into deadly conflicts. The experiences of Rwanda, Srebrenica and many other conflicts around the world should have provided us with the political will and the impetus for conflict prevention. Yet we are left to answer the questions posed by the Secretary-General: Why is conflict prevention still so seldom practised, and why do we so often fail when there is a clear potential for a preventive strategy to succeed?

It is my delegation's hope that the result of today's debate and the debate to follow in the General Assembly will support the realization of the goal of

prevention as the rule rather than the exception throughout the United Nations system.

The report of the Secretary-General contains a number of important recommendations addressed to many parts of the United Nations system. The Security Council must give serious consideration to those recommendations specific to its responsibilities and must undertake to work in collaboration with other organs in giving effect to them. The Secretary-General has urged us to demonstrate the political will necessary to assume our responsibilities in support of the United Nations in carrying out effective preventive action.

While it is not possible for me to dwell in great detail on the recommendations contained in the report, I will highlight those that relate directly to the premise that the Security Council has a key role to play in the prevention of armed conflict.

First, the Secretary-General's stated intention to provide periodic regional or subregional reports to the Security Council on threats to international peace and security and to provide suggestions with respect to how these threats might be addressed by the Council is an important first step in the process. It is imperative that the Secretary-General tell the Council what it needs to know so that the Council can formulate meaningful and effective responses.

Working in tandem or in cooperation with regional and subregional organizations in preparing those reports will enable us to benefit from those organizations' unique perspectives. We also support the idea of the Security Council considering the use of multidisciplinary expert support in its fact-finding missions to potential conflict areas and the establishment of new mechanisms for discussing conflict prevention measures on the basis of the reports of the Secretary-General and of the missions.

Second, Jamaica supports the steps proposed by the Secretary-General to enhance his traditional preventive role with respect to: the increased use of United Nations interdisciplinary fact-finding and confidence-building missions; to develop regional prevention strategies with regional partners and appropriate United Nations organs and agencies, including the possibility of establishing liaison offices with regional organizations; to use eminent persons for advice and action in support of preventing and resolving armed conflicts; and to improve the capacity and resource base for preventive action in the Secretariat. The issue of the Secretariat's capacity and resource base must be addressed by the relevant bodies, and the Secretary-General's request for a United-Nations-system-wide policy and analysis unit must be considered as a matter of priority. Early warning is a prerequisite for effective conflict prevention, and the Secretariat must have the capacity to carry out its responsibilities in that regard.

Third, Jamaica supports discussion in the Council on the use of preventive deployments before the onset of conflicts and the employment of such a strategy where appropriate. Where such missions have been used in the past, the United Nations has demonstrated success in preventing armed conflicts.

Fourth, we support the view that the Security Council should include peace-building components within peacekeeping operations. As we have stated in the past, peace-building is an important tool in conflict prevention, which may be applied before, during or after a conflict, as appropriate.

Fifth, Jamaica fully supports the view that adoption by the international community of measures to prevent the misuse and illicit transfer of small arms is of great importance in the prevention of armed conflicts. In that context, we support efforts to address the problems caused by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and we look forward to meaningful action being taken at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects, to be held in July. In that vein, we support also the inclusion by the Security Council of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration components in United Nations peacekeeping mandates, and we urge full support for such programmes.

Sixth, we support the call to address the needs of children and adolescents as a long-term conflict prevention measure, including the deployment of child-protection advisers in peacekeeping operations, and we support policies and resources that target the needs of children, including adolescents, in situations of potential conflict. Jamaica will participate fully in addressing many of those issues during the special session of the General Assembly on children, to be held in September.

Seventh, as the Secretary-General has aptly reminded us, the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000), aimed at giving greater attention to gender perspectives in its conflict prevention and

peace-building efforts. While some progress has been made, much needs to be done. Jamaica fully supports increased action to give full effect to resolution 1325 (2000), and we look forward to the action plan being developed by the Secretary-General's task force on women, peace and security.

We are being constantly challenged by an increasing number of deadly conflicts, which threaten international peace and security as well as the social, political and economic well-being of the global community. The ability of the international community to relieve the suffering of a vast majority of the affected is severely strained. The high cost of peacekeeping and of reconstruction in post-conflict situations weighs heavily in favour of prevention and peace-building measures to address the root causes of deadly conflicts. Already those costs deplete the limited resources made available to the international community to meet the development needs of the least developed countries. In his report, the Secretary-General confirms the view that although poverty by itself is not a root cause of violent conflict, poverty breeds conflict, and that equitable sustainable development does indeed have an important role in preventing armed conflict. The Secretary-General also reminds us that development cannot take place in conflict situations.

Finally, my delegation supports the convening of a meeting of the Security Council at the ministerial level, as requested in the presidential statement contained in document S/PRST/2000/25, in order to take appropriate action in furthering the Council's role in the prevention of armed conflict.

The President: I thank the representative of Jamaica for the kind words she addressed to me.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): I too want to join in welcoming you, Mr. President, to the Security Council today and for making yourself available for this important meeting. This is a topic of great importance to all members of the United Nations community. I want particularly to thank the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General for their efforts to move this Organization from reacting to crises to seeing if we can do a better job of preventing them. We have a very thoughtful report before us today; it provides a lot for us to consider and look at in the future as we think about this important issue.

I want to call attention in particular to the Secretary-General's observation that the primary responsibility for conflict prevention rests with national Governments, with civil society playing an important role. The main role of the United Nations and the international community is to support national efforts for conflict prevention and to assist in building national capacity in this field.

I think maybe one of the most useful services provided by the Secretary-General's report is that, while it reviews the mechanisms and institutions that are available to assist in the prevention of conflict, it really highlights the need for leadership and political will in dealing with crisis. It is our task to find ways to support prevention, but the primary need in most crises, if not all crises, is for someone — an actor of some sort, the Secretary-General or a regional organization — to take the lead. With that leadership, the question then becomes how the Security Council, the United Nations, the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies can support that impetus and that initiative to head off a conflict.

In that regard, the report is very useful in clarifying how the various parts of the United Nations system can improve cooperation and coordination. We fully agree that the Secretary-General, the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice and the various United Nations agencies, funds and programmes all have contributions to make. It is also necessary — as is increasingly happening, I am glad to say — that the various parts of the United Nations system improve communication with one another to forge new partnerships. But we have seen repeatedly in our work over the past year how that sometimes does not happen. We need to rededicate ourselves — all of us, as United Nations Members and not just as Security Council members — to breaking down barriers to communication and false attitudes that prevent United Nations bodies and institutions from talking to one another and from cooperating.

We strongly support the recommendation that the Security Council and the General Assembly make full use of the information and analysis provided by United Nations and other human rights mechanisms, as well as by non-governmental organizations, in order to identify massive human rights violations and to take early action. In our view, that should be a central element of trying to address crisis; we are seeing it play out now

in various parts of the world. We can do better in supporting that.

The Security Council is already moving in the direction of many of the Secretary-General's recommendations, and I think we have improved our work over the past year. In recent years members of the Council have drawn upon the advice and information provided by United Nations officials responsible for the protection of children in conflict, AIDS prevention and humanitarian response, in support of their mandated work in maintaining international peace and security.

I think that the Council is receptive to making further use of the great expertise and experience reflected throughout the United Nations system — I know my delegation certainly is — and we are increasingly doing so.

I wanted especially to applaud the Secretary-General's commitment to enhancing his own role in conflict prevention through four significant initiatives. He proposes to authorize more fact-finding and confidence-building missions to volatile regions; to build relationships between the United Nations and regional partners; to seek the help of panels of eminent persons for conflict prevention; and to improve the capacity within the Secretariat in support of conflict prevention. All of these have our strong support, and it goes back to the point I made at the outset about the need for leadership.

We also applaud the Secretary-General's recognition of the important role that must be played by civil society and private economic interests in conflict prevention. In volatile areas of potential conflict, the activities of international non-governmental organizations, both in relief efforts and in efforts aimed at creating and strengthening social, political and economic institutions, are indispensable. This is another barrier that we need to overcome. We simply cannot expect economic progress and development to take place without the involvement of private entities and non-governmental organizations.

My comments are by no means an exhaustive review of the advice and recommendations provided by this thoughtful report. This Council and the other constituent parts of the United Nations system will need time to evaluate it and time to work to fully digest the details and the recommendations. But it is a good basis — indeed, an excellent basis — for going ahead. Our hope is that we will be able to use it to devise better means to prevent conflicts and build on the progress that we are already making. Our goal is for us to need fewer interventions, peacekeeping missions or massive humanitarian relief efforts in future. We are making progress, but I want to note again the need for leadership and will to act before crisis instead of afterwards.

The President: I thank the representative of the United States for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Eldon (United Kingdom): Mr. Minister, it is very good to see you here today, and I well remember your visit during Bangladesh's last presidency of the Security Council. It is truly a pleasure to have you back with us. I wish also to thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her introduction to what is a very important and comprehensive report from the Secretariat.

Let me also draw attention to the fact that the representative of Sweden will be speaking later on in this debate on behalf of the European Union, and I associate myself with the remarks that the Council will hear later from him.

We are grateful for the comprehensive and thought-provoking report that we have in front of us today. The time has come to translate the rhetoric of conflict prevention into concrete action. We strongly endorse the Secretary-General's call for the international community to move from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. Prevention should be the cornerstone of the United Nations collective security system for the twenty-first century.

Any assessment of conflict must include the political, socio-economic and developmental variables relevant to that conflict. Preventive action must address its root causes rather than its symptoms. Therefore we strongly support the linkage the report makes between conflict prevention and sustainable development. Conflict and sustainable development are mutually exclusive conditions: over time, one will inevitably erode the other. Our aim must be to ensure that sustainable development — not conflict — gains the upper hand. Our collective efforts to meet the international development targets and the other commitments set out in the Millennium Summit Declaration are an important contribution towards addressing the root causes of conflict.

The United Nations agencies, funds and specialized agencies are key players in conflict prevention, in addition to the Secretariat, and here I would endorse the point that has just been made so eloquently by Ambassador Cunningham. We strongly support recommendation 10 of the Secretary-General's report, which encourages the administrators of United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies to consider how best to integrate conflict prevention into their various activities. This will be an important contribution towards mainstreaming conflict prevention approaches into their work.

We also agree with the report's assessment that the United Nations will not always be the actor best placed to take the lead. Where it is, the challenge, as the Secretary-General correctly identifies, is to mobilize the collective potential of the United Nations system with greater coherence and focus. This is an important area in which, frankly, we must do better. Greater interaction on conflict prevention between the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, as recommended by the Secretary-General, would be a good place to start.

That is why the United Kingdom, during our Security Council presidency last April, and with an eye on the importance of that need for coherence and coordination, suggested a joint meeting of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council to discuss those issues. We should not lose sight of the potential this cooperation can bring. We also strongly encourage more systematic cooperation between other parts of the United Nations system, with the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, and with other international actors. This is vital if scarce resources are to be used in the most effective way. There is, for example — as everyone around this table knows better than most — a critical need for improvement in designing effective, properly resourced disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes.

As the Secretary-General says, the United Nations needs to work with and help strengthen the capacity of regional partners. This has been a key conclusion of several of the Council's recent debates on conflict prevention and peace-building. We are keen to see this implemented in concrete and practical ways. Effective prevention strategies require the cooperation of both national and regional actors. The use of inter-agency task forces, such as the recent Task Force visit to West Africa, offers opportunities to integrate the efforts of the United Nations with those of regional and subregional organizations.

We also welcome the Secretary-General's intention to provide the Security Council with periodic regional or subregional reports on threats to international peace and security. We agree with his view that this approach will help to strengthen, rather than diminish, sovereignty. There is a powerful logic in the report's description of conflict prevention as being

> "the best protection for [a state's] citizens against unwelcome outside interference" *(S/2001/574, para. 168)*.

But, while respecting institutional mandates, we must adapt our efforts to the problem at hand. In certain regions, there may not be formal organizations with which to consult, but, instead, groupings of countries which have come together under informal ad hoc arrangements. We believe that the United Nations needs to be more creative about finding ways to work with such informal groups. The effectiveness of such strategies will be enhanced further if civil society and the private sector are pulling in the same direction. We therefore echo the Secretary-General's appeal to the private sector to adopt socially responsible practices designed to prevent, rather than foment, conflict.

Paragraph 55 of the report refers to the recent inter-agency mission to West Africa, which I have mentioned earlier. This, among other things, recommends the establishment of a United Nations office in West Africa headed by a new special representative. We support this idea, but need clarification on certain key aspects. For example, we would welcome clarification of the role and mandate of this office versus those of other Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in the region, and those of the political and post-conflict peace-building offices and United Nations country teams which are also present there. In this respect, we encourage stronger links between Headquarters and the United Nations country teams in the field.

We agree with recommendations 5 to 7 of the report on the important role of the International Court of Justice in the prevention of conflict and the peaceful settlement of disputes. The United Kingdom has for many years accepted the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court We urge Members of the Organization that have not yet done so to take this step.

We also welcome the thrust of recommendation 9 and the Secretary-General's intention to enhance the traditional preventive role of his office. We would encourage him to develop and enhance his preventive diplomacy efforts in the ways outlined in the report. We stand ready to support him in that endeavour.

Finally, the report contains an appeal to the donor community to increase the flow of development assistance to developing countries. Over the past few years the United Kingdom has been one of the few countries to significantly increase the resources it devotes to development assistance.

We are full-square behind the United Nations efforts in taking forward the recommendations set out in this report. It is important, and that is why I have spoken at greater length than usual. We will continue to engage with the Secretariat and the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in finding ways to do this. By reducing the level and intensity of conflicts, we will significantly enhance prospects for global development and poverty reduction. That is a goal to which we should all be directing our efforts.

The President: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation, Sir, welcomes your coming to New York to preside over this important open debate of the Security Council. I am also grateful to the Secretary-General for his report, as well as to Ms. Fréchette, the Deputy Secretary-General, for her statement.

The Secretary-General's report is comprehensive. It has provided us with a detailed analysis of the role of the United Nations in conflict prevention. It thus provides the Security Council, the General Assembly and other United Nations organs an excellent foundation for the consideration of the subject and for taking relevant actions.

The report reiterates that the United Nations conflict-prevention efforts must conform with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and that successful conflict prevention depends on the agreement and support of the national governments and other major national actors. These are very important principles and guidelines that need to be followed by the United Nations in its conflict-prevention work. I am confident that through the consideration of this report the Members will gain a better understanding of the role of the United Nations in conflict prevention.

The root causes of the armed conflicts in the world today can be found in very complex economic, social, historic and religious issues, as well as in the tribal and territorial problems that are a legacy of colonialism. Therefore conflict prevention must treat both the symptoms and causes of the disease. Prevention strategies will have to suit the needs of the different regions, countries and circumstances of given conflicts.

In the wake of the cold war we have seen an increase in armed conflicts within States, particularly conflicts between different ethnic groups. In the Middle East, the Balkans and the Great Lakes region of Africa there are ethnic conflicts, and sometimes these conflicts are further complicated by religious disputes. As an overwhelming majority of countries in the world are multi-ethnic and multi-religious, the realization of national unity and harmony, including the equal treatment and coexistence of different religions, is the most basic condition for social stability and development. Increases in ethnic tension and religious disputes will only lead to turbulence and economic and social stagnation in the concerned countries and regions.

From the perspective of conflict prevention, it is necessary to advocate national equality, harmony and the sharing of interests. In particular, minorities need to be guaranteed equal status and an equal right to participate in the political, economic and cultural life of the country. If necessary, minorities also need preferential treatment and to be encouraged to participate in the administration of the State. It is also necessary, in the interest of promoting religious freedom, to advocate mutual respect among different religions, and for tolerance and reconciliation.

The international community is a large family composed of different countries. It is important to stress the democratization of inter-State relations in conflict prevention. Because countries have different social systems, ideologies, value systems and religious beliefs, it is necessary in international relations to strictly abide by the basic principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aggression, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.

The United Nations needs to play a significant role in the democratization of inter-State relations. As regards the Middle East, the Balkans and the Great Lakes region in Africa, as well as other countries and regions where conflicts currently exist, if the parties concerned can abide by the basic norms governing inter-State relations, then their conflicts can be speedily resolved and the outbreak of new conflicts can be prevented.

Recently leaders of China, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan held a successful meeting in Shanghai. They established a Shanghai organization which represents a new model for regional cooperation characterized by joint initiatives on the part of both large and small States, by making security the top priority, and by mutual benefit and synergy. The Shanghai spirit thus fostered stresses inter-State trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for pluralism in civilization and common development. This is also an important initiative in the area of establishing regional conflict-prevention mechanisms to fight terrorism, separatism and extremism, which are detrimental to regional security.

The wars and armed conflicts taking place in some countries and regions have taken a heavy toll on the lives and property of the people. Although the capacity and role of the United Nations in conflict prevention are limited, as rightly pointed out by the Secretary-General in his report, conflict prevention is still an important dimension of the maintenance of international peace and security. It remains one of the major tasks of the United Nations. China is prepared, with other Members, to make its contribution to enhancing the United Nations conflict-prevention capacity.

Mr. Jerandi (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is honoured to see you, Mr. Minister, presiding over this open meeting of the Security Council. This confirms once again Bangladesh's unswerving commitment to peace and prevention of armed conflict. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for the high-quality report he has presented to the Council, and Ms. Fréchette for her important statement in introducing this document.

Our debate today is very important because it concerns the prevention of armed conflict, a topic that takes us to the core, to the very heart of the prerogatives of the United Nations and its mission, to its *raison d'être* of protecting humanity from the scourge of war and armed conflict. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, the prevention of armed conflicts remains a burning topic, and after 55 years of existence the United Nations, the indispensable instrument of such prevention, is today endowed with a wealth of experience that will enable it to fine-tune its role in order better to respond to the requirements of the modern world.

The Security Council has already undertaken a careful consideration of the question of prevention, to which it devoted two presidential statements. It has also dealt with the topic in other texts that emphasize related areas such as peace-building, to which a presidential statement, inter alia, was devoted in February, during the Tunisian presidency, under the topic "Peace-building: towards a comprehensive approach".

Today there is real awareness in the Security Council, in the United Nations system and in the international community as a whole of the need for a real change in the perception of the role of prevention and in the understanding of its rightful place in maintaining peace and security in their broadest meaning.

The Security Council is intensely active in the field of prevention, in particular by setting up peacekeeping operations, which are preventive operations par excellence. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council are also exercising their respective prerogatives in this field. We are gratified to see that the report is also addressed to the General Assembly, for it addresses many of that body's concerns.

Ever since he acceded to his lofty responsibilities at the head of the Organization, the Secretary-General has promoted conflict prevention into an enduring feature of his efforts for peace, and he has defined the principle of the need to progress from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention of armed conflict. Over the past few years, other actors within and outside the United Nations have also made efforts in this direction. It is now clear that the time has come to develop a comprehensive and coherent strategy that will enable the international community to make conflict prevention an essential component of its strategies and policies to maintain international peace

and security and to promote economic and social development. In short, this is the moment to take a substantive step towards making prevention a central element of international initiatives for peace and development.

It is in this context that the report of the Secretary-General assumes its importance. The analysis it contains is pertinent and piercing, and includes the ten principles that he has proposed to support promotion and prevention efforts. The recommendations are rich, diverse and certainly very useful. On the whole, we support them. The path he has traced towards the goal is clear. Therefore the Security Council should undertake, without delay, a careful examination of this document — bearing in mind, however, the need for a reasonable period of time for our Governments to study the report and formulate clearly articulated positions. We therefore propose the establishment of a working group of the Security Council whose mandate would be to study the report in detail and make suggestions on specific decisions and actions that the Council could take to follow up the report of the Secretary-General.

Tunisia will actively participate in the work of the Council and the other bodies of the United Nations on this report because a consideration of all aspects of prevention should now become a priority for us.

The President: I thank the representative of Tunisia for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Granovsky (Russian Federation) *(spoke in Russian)*: We associate ourselves with the warm words expressed to you, Mr. President, by previous speakers. It is a great honour for us that at today's exceptionally important meeting of the Security Council the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh is presiding over our work. Bangladesh is a State which is friendly with Russia, and which plays an important role in the efforts of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security. We also express gratitude to the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Louise Fréchette, for having introduced the report of the Secretary-General and for her important comments.

Our meeting has ushered in an important discussion which will take place in the United Nations about the report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict. We are very grateful to him for having prepared this important document, which sets forth a well-considered strategy for an approach which should be followed by the principal international organization in the search for answers to the many and varied challenges of our day.

Russia agrees with the main thrust of the report and supports most of its recommendations. Furthermore, we believe that the Secretary-General has drawn important conclusions which should be the basis of the overall approach to settling crises, including humanitarian ones. We refer primarily to the conclusions about the key role of the United Nations in strengthening national capacities for reacting to crises and about the need for the consent and support of each interested government and its internal political actors with regard to efforts to prevent conflicts, and also with regard to the desirability of political will being demonstrated by neighbouring States, regional actors and other countries.

Before setting specific considerations on the substance of the recommendations of the report, I should like to make it clear that we deem it advisable to confine ourselves now simply to those issues which relate directly to the Security Council. As you know, the President of the General Assembly has planned to hold a general discussion on the 12th and 13th of July, at which time our delegation will speak on the remaining aspects of this problem.

We support the proposal of the Secretary-General about the search for new forms of interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly in the interests of a more effective, more timely ability to prevent armed conflicts. We believe that periodic formal meetings of the Security Council, at which there could be a frank exchange of views about hot spots and the situation around them, is one such channel for a useful and, we hope, productive dialogue on this question.

We also support the ideas of the Secretary-General with respect to his preparation of periodic reports on situations in so-called areas at risk. We believe that this initiative is exceptionally important. Russia also agrees with the Secretary-General's approach with regard to the dispatch by the Security Council of fact-finding missions. We are convinced that these missions have already and repeatedly proven their necessity and played an important role in the search for necessary solutions.

At the same time, we have some doubts about the advisability of creating certain subsidiary bodies of the

Security Council to discuss conflict prevention. We see no need to institutionalize our discussions.

In conclusion, I would express the hope that the discussion in various United Nations formats of the Secretary-General's comprehensive report will truly help to enhance the effectiveness of the international community's work in the prevention of armed conflicts.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): Ireland is very pleased to see Foreign Minister Azad of Bangladesh presiding over this important meeting. We welcome him warmly.

May I also thank Deputy Secretary-General Fréchette for her thoughtful and comprehensive introductory statement.

Later in today's debate, Sweden will make a statement in its capacity as Presidency of the European Union (EU). Ireland fully associates itself with that statement.

The report which the Secretary-General has provided to this Council and to the General Assembly is a valuable and forward-thinking document which presents a challenge to the entire United Nations system and to the Member States. The report makes clear in human and economic terms the inherent, indeed self-evident, benefits of conflict prevention, as well as the corollary: the devastating consequences of failure to prevent conflict and of tardy reaction to situations where lives are already in danger or being lost.

The Secretary-General is correct. We need to undertake the conceptual leap to thinking in terms of prevention, to seeing conflict through the prevention lens. Ireland is glad to have the opportunity to discuss the Secretary-General's report here today and we look forward to its consideration by the General Assembly and the other relevant organs of the United Nations. We believe that the report should be approached in a practical manner and with an open mind. We should not be deflected today into a dispute over the prerogatives of the United Nations various organs. Instead we should try to tease out what the Security Council can do in practical terms to advance the goals in the Secretary-General's report.

Ireland supports the report's basic premises, its principles and, in general terms, its 29 recommendations. We would wish to look in particular at three specific areas: first, the complementary relationship between conflict prevention and development; secondly, the important role of regional organizations; and, thirdly, the need to strengthen coherence and capacity concerning conflict prevention in the United Nations system.

First of all, let me take up the complementary relationship between conflict prevention and development. An effective conflict prevention strategy will require a comprehensive and multidimensional approach that encompasses both short-term preventative and long-term development aspects. As the Secretary-General has noted, development assistance by itself cannot prevent or end conflict, but it can help to create the underlying conditions for the development of peaceful, stable and prosperous societies.

In our view, development cooperation focused on poverty eradication is the most powerful instrument that the international community has to address the long-term root causes of conflict and to promote peace. The Secretary-General has called for development assistance to focus on decreasing structural risk factors. The primary risk factor is poverty. A central issue that we all need to address is the decline in aid flows to the poorest countries. We echo the Secretary-General's call for the donor community to increase aid flows to our developing country partners. At the Millennium Summit, the Prime Minister of Ireland, Mr. Bertie Ahern, committed Ireland to reaching the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product by 2007. This will involve a four-fold increase in our development assistance budget.

If the international community is to be genuine and serious about conflict prevention, we must be wholehearted in supporting poverty reduction and sustainable development. We should not say one thing in this room and act differently elsewhere. Ireland would also like to see enhanced coherence between major donors. We strongly support efforts to strengthen the partnership between the United Nations system and other major partners, including the European Union. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund involvement in helping developing countries prepare poverty-reduction strategy papers has a key role in long-term conflict prevention efforts. The United Nations operational development arm can play a very significant role in poverty reduction and in helping

partner Governments reach the development targets agreed at the Millennium Summit.

Successful conflict prevention means that we must work closely alongside our developing country partners before, during and after conflict. Prevention also means preventing the re-emergence of serious conflict. In that context, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes are increasingly seen as an essential part of post-conflict resolution. Ireland supports the Secretary-General's recommendation that this Council include, as appropriate, a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration component in the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping and peace-building operations. It is also important to be aware that these operations ensure that the development dimension is built in as a matter of course.

We agree very much with the Secretary-General that efforts to prevent conflict should promote a broad range of human rights, including civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights, and the right to development. Meaningful conflict prevention strategies must also take account of gender equality and Ireland strongly endorses the Secretary-General's call on this Council to give greater attention to gender perspectives in conflict prevention and peace-building.

In the second instance, let me address the important role of regional organizations. Many conflicts are inseparable from their regional contexts. Support for regional and subregional actors should therefore be a central element of conflict prevention. For example, the development of appropriate institutional capacities for early warning and conflict prevention by the Organization of African Unity and, more recently, the Economic Community of West African States is warmly welcomed. At the same time, there is a need for international partners to provide further assistance and training to enable these and other organizations to build on their achievements to date.

Ireland supports the development of regional prevention strategies by the United Nations and its regional partners, inter alia, through the establishment of United Nations liaison offices. The regular meetings between the United Nations and the regional organizations have considerable potential. The Secretary-General has recommended that the follow-up processes to these meetings receive the fullest support. Ireland agrees with him.

As a member of the European Union, and as a long-standing contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations, Ireland sees a growing synergy between the EU's work and the work of the United Nations in conflict prevention. The fostering of a culture of prevention, recommended to us by Secretary-General Annan, is indeed at the heart of the EU's approach. The recent European Council in Gothenburg adopted an EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts. This Programme accords the EU's highest political priority to improving effectiveness and coherence in this area.

Ireland joins the Secretary-General in highlighting the preventive potential of peacekeeping operations. We have all seen the benefit of preventive deployment, as well as the cost involved when the international community either fails to deploy preventively, or when it withdraws or winds up a successful ongoing operation.

We believe, in particular, that there is untapped potential in preventive peacekeeping activities conducted by civilian police, whose community-policing approach can play a significant role in reducing tension and building confidence.

The goal of conflict prevention is an important consideration in building crisis management-capabilities in the context of European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Ireland believes that the Secretary-General's recommendations are fully consistent with the European Union's programme for the prevention of violent conflicts, which confirms that "The development of ESDP has, since the outset, been intended to strengthen the EU's capacity fo action in the crucial field of conflict prevention".

Thirdly, I would like to stress the need to strengthen coherence and capacity in the United Nations system concerning conflict prevention.

The Secretary-General has clearly identified the need for enhanced coherence in our conflict prevention efforts. The United Nations has developed important new tools to improve coherence through the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. These new instruments help focus the "conflict prevention lens" by identifying, prioritizing and implementing a coherent approach to development and conflict prevention with our development partners at the country level.

This Council has recognized the important role played by the resident coordinator system as the United Nations presence on the ground before, during and after conflict. This role should be enhanced.

We support the Secretary-General's call for greater coordination on conflict prevention within the United Nations system and his call for adequate resources for the Department of Political Affairs to carry out its responsibilities as the system focal point in this area.

The establishment of a new unit to serve as the secretariat for the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, as recently proposed by the Secretary-General elsewhere, would underpin efforts to enhance a strategic approach by the Organization to conflict prevention. We support the establishment of this unit, and we call on all other delegations to demonstrate their commitment to such a strategic approach by supporting this proposal.

At the same time, we want to ensure a joined-up approach in the United Nations, both at Headquarters and in the field. We must at all levels ensure an entry point for the development dimension.

The Charter of the United Nations is a document of seminal political sophistication and prescience. It was agreed by leaders whose life experience had been forged in the crucible of the most destructive war in history. The authors of the Charter and the Member States that embrace it have given to the United Nations, as one of its principal purposes, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". Had the purpose been to save the generations from the effects of war, the Charter would have said so. It did not. The vision of the United Nations Charter is in significant part a preventive one when it comes to conflict. Surely this is not in question.

With this in mind, Ireland will strive so that the Secretary-General's report may trigger far-reaching, practical action to realize that vision.

Mr. President: I thank the representative of Ireland for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): It is an honour and a pleasure to see you, Mr. Foreign Minister, presiding today over this very important debate that has brought us together.

France welcomes the important report that the Secretary-General has transmitted to us. We also welcome the initiative taken last July by Jamaica. Given the discussions on this theme that were conducted in 1999 and then in 2000, this is a good occasion to take stock of the situation on the basis of the assessment, conclusions and concrete recommendations of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, for which we thank him.

Sweden will be making a statement in due course on behalf of the European Union, to which my delegation, of course, fully subscribes. I would like to make a few comments on the points that seem to me particularly essential.

The report of the Secretary-General and the discussion that will be taking place in the Council and in the General Assembly come at a good time. While the Brahimi report and the Millennium Summit have paved the way for the necessary reform of peacekeeping and the daily management of United Nations operations make us think increasingly of strategies for crisis resolution and post-conflict peace-building, it appears urgent to gear our strategies also towards the prevention of armed conflict.

Given the considerable United Nations efforts in peace operations to deal with conflicts, usually at a moment's notice and in urgent circumstances, it is necessary and legitimate to wonder whether the international community should not make an extra effort in order better to anticipate and prevent conflicts while there is still time to do so. Certainly this is the least costly solution — whether in human, political, economic or financial terms. Above all, it is the most suitable way to establish conditions for lasting peace. In the countries middle of an acute crisis – and we have several examples of such crises in Africa — the United Nations and the donors face the worst possible conditions in war-torn and occupied countries, with their resources sometimes plundered, and with a lack of clear political prospects for restoring trust among the people. In these conditions, to start implementing the economic and social development programmes that are necessary for bringing about a lasting resolution to the crisis is a considerable challenge. Moreover, these countries are marginalized by a world economy that has left them behind. Post-conflict peace-building, although it draws largely on the same resources and instruments as prevention, is consequently a more difficult and uncertain kind of action. Unfortunately,

we see confirmation of this every day. If we really want to implement fully the primary mandate of the United Nations, which is "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", we must therefore take more account of the need for prevention in our work, while respecting the principles of the Charter. All actors — Member States, United Nations organs, agencies and programmes, donors, regional organizations and civil society have their role to play.

The report of the Secretary-General gives us an assessment and useful avenues for reflection and action. I wish to highlight three points that emerge from the report and that reaffirm ideas brought out in previous discussions.

First of all is the need to develop a true "culture of prevention", that takes a much longer view of action than is the case today, and that is sufficiently well established across the entire United Nations system, while also bringing in external actors to a greater extent.

It is important, as stressed by the Secretary-General, that not only the United Nations bodies — the Secretary-General, the General Assembly, the Security Council and agencies and programmes such as United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) — but also the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and private actors — non-governmental organizations and enterprises — all acquire a true preventive reflex either to identify and follow up on reliable indicators to mobilize the attention of the international community, or to better design and guide their own actions based on a clear goal of conflict prevention.

Efforts already made and described in the report should be encouraged. The increased trend in UNDP activities towards encouraging good governance and the rule of law, in order to make development projects part of harmonious and sustainable economic and social development, is a step in the right direction. Awareness within the Bretton Woods institutions must also be developed. The United Nations organs could also usefully draw on the proposals contained in the report to create the structures for dialogue and discussion about specific conflict-prevention problems. France hopes that such structures will soon emerge. In due course France will be making its contribution, particularly in the Economic and Social Council, in the General Assembly, or in the Security Council.

Secondly, there should be increased coordination among the various actors in conflict prevention. Given the diversity of the actors involved in the various aspects of conflict prevention policies, coordination is decisive. This is more difficult to promote than peacekeeping or peace-building, because to a certain extent the aspect of gravity or urgency that spurs action is lacking. Mobilizing energies for conflict prevention will depend both on the culture of prevention that I referred to, and on good coordination among the various actors.

Here we must not limit ourselves to the distinction that is sometimes drawn between "operational" measures and "structural" measures for conflict prevention. It does describe the whole range of possible measures within specific time frames. However, in practice, cooperation among all actors concerned will be necessary and proper coordination mechanisms must be established, in particular with the regional organizations and the Bretton Woods institutions.

The third very important point concerns the specific roles played by the Secretary-General and the Security Council. It is important to note that the Charter entrusts special roles in conflict prevention to the Secretary-General and the Council, and it is important to lend our support to the specific proposals made in the report on this subject. The Secretary-General is authorized to bring to the attention of the Security Council, pursuant to Article 99 of the Charter, any given situation that may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security. The periodic reports of the Secretary-General on regional or subregional situations will provide an opportunity to nurture dialogue on this point with the Security Council. There is also a need to strengthen the early warning, reaction and analysis capacities of the Secretariat, so that the Secretary-General can be in a better position to perform this function.

Proposals on this were made in the report of the Secretary-General of 1 June 2001 (A/55/977) on the follow up to the Brahimi report, and they deserve every attention and support on our part. The Security Council has at its disposal a whole range of means that it should use as and when appropriate. Here I would recall Security Council missions, proposals or support for peaceful resolution of disputes, preventive disarmament, preventive arms embargoes, combating illicit trafficking in mineral resources, diamond

embargoes, the creation of demilitarized zones and the preventive deployment of peacekeeping operations, including in the civilian police area. These are all very important avenues.

In conclusion, I wish to say that today's debate is a useful opportunity to recall the shared concerns of Council members on a question that directly affects us all as we discharge our mandate and that should be translated into action and decisions in the months to come. We hope that soon this report will be taken up in the General Assembly so that all competent bodies can be fully involved in this useful and necessary effort.

The President: I thank the representative of France for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Mr. President, it is an honour and a pleasure to see you presiding over this important meeting. It is also a testimony to Bangladesh's persistent efforts to prevent conflict and promote a culture of peace.

Norway welcomes the Secretary-General's report on conflict prevention. We share his vision that we need to move the United Nations system from a "culture of reaction to a culture of prevention."

In paragraph 165 of the report the Secretary-General states:

> "Most of the factors that stopped the United Nations intervening to prevent genocide in Rwanda remain present today."

We find this fact deeply disturbing. It provides a clear rationale for why conflict prevention must continue to be high on the Council's agenda. There is a need to act more decisively to address looming conflicts where the United Nations can work in concert with regional organizations and initiatives. Too often the signs of escalating conflict are clear to the world community, but action is withheld.

In the following I will provide Norway's views on some of the principal issues in the report. We will comment further on the report during the announced meetings in the General Assembly. Allow me to stress, however, that conflict prevention has to be approached in a comprehensive manner. It is therefore important that while the report is being discussed both in the Council and in the Assembly, it is vital that we do not end up with a United Nations that reacts in a piece-meal manner to issues that are complex and intertwined in the field.

An understanding of the local and underlying causes of each conflict is a fundamental premise for successful prevention. The United Nations presence at the country level is important for the early prevention of conflict. It is also important in ensuring that preventive strategies are based on local initiatives and participation. In our view, there is a need to clarify roles, responsibilities and lines of communication for work in the United Nations system at the country level, in order to secure the best use of existing resources for conflict prevention. The role of the Department of Political Affairs as focal point in the United Nations system for prevention and peace-building makes it paramount that the Department coordinate and cooperate with other departments, funds and agencies. We are pleased to note that the report presents this as an area of priority for the Department.

We agree that preventive action should be initiated at the earliest possible stage of a conflict cycle in order for it to be effective. The role of the funds, programmes and other specialized agencies is crucial in that respect.

The Security Council needs to address conflict prevention in a more systematic manner. We support the recommendation that more active use be made of preventive deployment, and that peace-building components be included in peacekeeping operations.

Timing is key in operational conflict prevention. Financial resources must be available to act swiftly. Norway has supported the Trust Fund for Preventive Action, and we would like to use this opportunity to appeal to other donor countries to provide financial resources to the Fund.

Regional and subregional organizations, such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Economic Community of West African States, are developing their capacity for conflict prevention. These are measures that should be actively supported by the international community. Norway has provided support to the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. Within the broad mandate of Chapter VIII of the Charter, the United Nations should seek to strengthen its cooperation with regional organizations on conflict prevention.

A wide range of cooperative measures are at hand for the United Nations system, such as preventive diplomacy and support for democratic principles, security sector reform and human rights measures. These are, and should be, the main components of preventive strategies. However, those strategies are effective only when conflicts are driven by grievances that can be addressed by such measures, and where there exists a local commitment to peaceful solutions to conflict. We must not be blind to the fact that economic ambition and greed drive many conflicts that constitute a threat to international peace and security. Today, widespread poverty and armed conflict go hand in hand in countries that are rich in resources. How can peace be secured among belligerents that actively seek to undermine efforts to prevent armed conflict? Reducing the profits of war is an important preventive measure. The Council should continue its work to develop more effective measures targeted at the illegal exploitation of natural resources and at related factors that fuel armed conflict. Experience indicates that such measures serve to strengthen rather than to weaken national sovereignty.

The profits of war fuel the illegal trade in small arms. Practical disarmament measures such as "weapons for development" projects and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration are important tools for preventing conflict. We appeal to donor countries to provide the necessary funding for such projects. Norway has supported a wide range of practical disarmament measures, and contributed to the establishment of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Trust Fund on Small Arms. In our view, the United Nations should increase its support for regional measures to curb the illicit trade in small arms.

The first United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects will take place at United Nations Headquarters from 9 to 20 July. It is of prime importance that the conference agree on a programme of action to curb the illicit trade in small arms.

With respect to peace operations, Norway agrees that particular emphasis needs to be placed on the preventive role of civilian police in peace operations. In general, the report (S/2000/809) of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations chaired by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi was a milestone in providing a unified approach to peace and security. We consider many of its recommendations as key to strengthening the work of the United Nations in preventing conflict. It is of utmost importance that the ongoing deliberations in the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations result in support for strengthening capacity within the Secretariat.

Finally, we welcome the approach taken by the Secretary-General in inviting Member States to participate in developing a road map for the implementation of the specific recommendations in the report. In that respect we, in general, support the proposal for a mechanism under the Security Council to discuss prevention cases on a continuing basis. We believe we should first consider the appropriateness of using existing mechanisms.

As Member States, we need to do more than express our support for the Secretary-General's vision of moving from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. We must take ownership. The primary responsibility for the peaceful settlement of conflict rests with the national Governments concerned. Without the will for peace, the options for conflict prevention are limited. Furthermore, it is through the leadership of Member States in United Nations organs and in the governing councils of United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies that that change can materialize. Ultimately, these questions are linked to the thorny issues of authority and division of labour within the United Nations system. As conflict prevention transcends the boundaries among the mandates of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, we as Member States have a particular responsibility to provide for a unified United Nations approach.

The President: I thank the representative of Norway for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): At the outset, Mr. Azad, I would like to welcome you back to this Chamber. It is our honour and our pleasure to have you presiding over today's important meeting. I wish to express our appreciation to the Bangladesh presidency for convening this meeting on an issue that constitutes one of the main tasks and responsibilities of the United Nations: the prevention of armed conflict.

Let me also thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Louise Fréchette, for her introduction of the Secretary-General's report (S/2001/574), which reviews the progress achieved in recent years in

developing the conflict prevention capacity of the United Nations system and which spells out specific recommendations on how to enhance it in cooperation with Member States.

We welcome the report and we commend the Secretary-General for the excellent job done in preparing it. My delegation is impressed with the comprehensive nature of the report, and with its correct philosophical premises, factual data, result-oriented recommendations and forward-looking conclusions. We fully subscribe to the main motto of the Secretary-General's report: that the time has come to translate the rhetoric of conflict prevention into concrete action. In our view, the document represents a remarkable step forward in making the potential of the United Nations for conflict prevention more effective and in moving the international community from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention.

At the same time, since the report is still under thorough consideration in my capital, at this stage I will limit myself to a few preliminary remarks on its content.

Ukraine has been actively advocating the development of reliable preventive United Nations mechanisms for the timely detection and elimination of potential sources of conflict. Most recently, at the Millennium and Security Council summits, the President of Ukraine put forward a proposal to develop a comprehensive United Nations strategy for conflict prevention on the basis of the large-scale use of preventive diplomacy and peace-building.

Against this background, we find that the content of the report is largely in line with the proposal of the President of Ukraine. Specifically, we consider fundamental the 10 principles proposed by the Secretary-General as guidelines for the future approach of the United Nations to conflict prevention, and we support their full application. We believe that these principles lay down solid conceptual foundations for the further elaboration of a comprehensive long-term conflict-prevention strategy for the United Nations and for the international community as a whole.

In the context of the Secretary-General's recommendations on the role of the Security Council, my delegation welcomes his intention to initiate a practice of providing the Council with periodic reports on the regional aspects of conflicts. The Security Council's efforts in conflict settlement in recent years — in particular in the Balkans, the Middle East, West Africa and other parts of the world — clearly testify to the significance of a regional approach to existing problems.

We believe that the recommendation to consider the establishment of new mechanisms of the Security Council to discuss prevention cases on the basis of the Secretary-General's regional reports deserves further examination. In our view, at the initial stage of introducing the practice of submitting periodic regional reports, their consideration can be entrusted to the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations. My delegation also agrees with the view of the Secretary-General that Security Council fact-finding missions can have important preventive effects. Therefore, we are in favour of introducing the same practice of visits to conflict-prone states or potential zones of conflict.

We believe that the Security Council should more frequently resort to its past experience of preventive deployment, with the consent of the host country, of operations in areas of growing tension, as in the case of the United Nations mission in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The unique and successful experience of the United National Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP), which remains the only preventive deployment mission in the history of United Nations peace support efforts, should, in our view, be further exploited and developed, with a view to creating a qualitatively new type of operation: a conflict-prevention operation.

Ukraine, while maintaining its position on the leading role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts, firmly believes that the task of eliminating the root causes of these conflicts — in particular those of an economic, social or humanitarian nature — falls basically under the competence of other principal United Nations bodies and specialized agencies. In this regard, we subscribe to the Secretary-General's view that a successful preventive strategy depends on the close cooperation of many United Nations actors. In this respect, we look forward to the forthcoming discussion of the Secretary-General's report by the General Assembly on 12 and 13 July.

We feel also that the traditional role of the Secretary-General in discharging his mandate — which is derived from Article 99 of the Charter — through "quiet diplomacy" or "good offices" can be enhanced through the implementation of the four proposals

outlined in his report, all of which we support. In particular, we find useful and constructive the idea of identifying eminent persons to serve as an informal network for advice and action in support of the Secretary-General's efforts to prevent and resolve armed conflicts. Ukraine stands ready to provide a list of candidates for that system. We would also encourage the Secretary-General to resort more actively, in conducting conflict-prevention missions, to the use of special envoys appointed on the basis of a roster of eminent and qualified experts of Member States.

As far as a United Nations regional presence is concerned, we are in favour of the idea of creating United Nations liaison offices at the headquarters of the regional organizations, as was done in Addis Ababa in 1998, to coordinate United Nations conflict-prevention efforts with those of the regional organizations. In our view, this concept should be further developed, with a view to the creation of United Nations regional centres on conflict prevention. In this context, let me recall Ukraine's proposal to set up such a centre under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Ukraine's capital, Kiev.

We also encourage the Secretary-General to take further initiatives as concerns his joint preventive actions with the Security Council. In our view, the recent mission of the Secretary-General to the Middle East serves as a good example of such joint action on conflict prevention, initiated by the Secretary-General on the basis of the mandate given him by the Security Council.

Lastly, my delegation believes that it would be appropriate for the Council to consider following up today's debate in the form of an official document that would accurately reflect the ideas and assessments of the participants in the discussion and endorse the Secretary-General's recommendations.

Ukraine also welcomes the adoption, at the recent European Union summit in Göoteborg, of the European Union programme for the prevention of violent conflicts as a demonstration of the continued commitment of those countries to this important issue.

Finally, let me express our hope that the current open debate, focused on the Secretary-General's report on conflict prevention, will foster the effective implementation of the recommendations contained therein and contribute to the goal of mobilizing the collective potential of the United Nations, its Member States and other international stakeholders in eliminating the threat of the emergence of armed conflicts. Ukraine is determined to continue its efforts to achieve this goal.

The President: I thank the representative of Ukraine for the kind words he addressed to me.

Ms. Lee (Singapore): Sir, the Singapore delegation joins our colleagues in expressing our pleasure at seeing you preside over the debate today. We would also like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her concise summary of the crucial points in the Secretary-General's report.

A prodigious amount of work has been done by institutions such as the Carnegie Commission and the International Peace Academy to better define the concept of conflict prevention and identify its many aspects. We also pay tribute to those individual States Members of the United Nations, particularly Sweden, which have also made substantial contributions to promoting a better understanding of this issue.

We look forward to the statements to be made by the non-members of the Council later today and will therefore be brief. As this issue will come up again next month in the General Assembly, we will also confine our comments today to the role of the Security Council.

This is the third open debate of the Security Council on this issue. The Secretary-General has suggested that the time has come for us to translate the rhetoric of conflict prevention into concrete action. We should heed his call and make practical suggestions on how the role of the Security Council in preventing armed conflict could be strengthened.

We need to bear in mind that the Council has by no means an exclusive role. Whatever role is envisaged, it should not be performed in contravention of cardinal principles such as sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. In this regard, the Secretary-General's report on the prevention of armed conflict is not only comprehensive in scope and conceptual analysis, but also rich in practical suggestions. If each actor could play its role in conflict prevention effectively, we would be well on our way towards establishing a culture of prevention.

With respect to the role of the Security Council, the Secretary-General noted in paragraph 34 of the report before us that the Security Council's

> "focus remains almost exclusively on crises and emergencies, normally becoming involved only when violence has already occurred on a large scale."

This is not only a reflection of the heavy demands on the time and attention of the Council, but also, to be frank, a function of the lack of political will. We should resolve, as a matter of priority, to address the gap between what we say and what we do in the area of conflict prevention. Our credibility depends on how successfully we do this.

Until we can summon political will collectively, our discussions on conflict prevention in this Chamber will remain abstract. In this context, we commend recent efforts of the Secretary-General to play a more active role in conflict prevention and to strengthen the Secretariat's early warning analysis capacities. The Secretary-General's visit to the Middle East and active role in the Middle East process is but the most recent contribution he has made to the ongoing efforts to achieve a just and lasting solution in the Middle East. His involvement demonstrates the United Nations continued commitment to the region and brings a message of hope and promise. In a quiet and effective way, the Secretary-General and his special representatives are also active in numerous missions across the globe aimed primarily at conflict prevention.

In this regard, we welcome the intention of the Secretary-General to present to the Council periodic reports on disputes, which would focus on inter-State issues that could pose a threat to international peace and security and on the Secretary-General's proposals for preventive measures. This would significantly enhance the capacity of the Council to take the appropriate preventive action at the appropriate time.

The President: I thank the representative of Singapore for her kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Kasse (Mali) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, first of all, to perform the pleasant task of expressing to you, Mr. Foreign Minister, my delegation's satisfaction at seeing you presiding over today's meeting and to ask you to convey our thanks to Ambassador Chowdhury for the excellent manner in which he has been guiding the work of the Council this month. We are grateful for the initiative of the Bangladesh delegation to organize this open meeting of the Security Council on the prevention of armed conflicts.

We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his analyses and the relevant and bold recommendations contained in the excellent report before us. We thank Ms. Louise Fréchette, the Deputy Secretary-General, for her introduction of the report.

In his report on the prevention of armed conflicts, the Secretary-General reminds us that the core mission of the United Nations remains "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". However, after more than half a century of existence, it is clear that the United Nations has, basically, sought to ensure collective security by deploying peacekeeping operations, rather than by considering concrete measures to prevent conflicts.

Less than a year ago the Security Council held its second open debate on this important issue. During that meeting, many Member States rightfully emphasized that above all we had to tackle the socio-economic causes of conflict, and they therefore advocated increased development assistance as a way of preventing conflict. Others felt that areas such as defending human rights, good governance, the rule of law and democratization were the main pillars of preventive action.

During the Millennium Summit last September, the heads of State and Government of our global Organization reasserted the relevance of these approaches to conflict prevention. They concluded that the most promising form of prevention was to elaborate integrated, long-term strategies combining a broad range of political, economic, social and other measures to reduce or suppress the causes of conflict.

On that basis, my delegation would like to emphasize that success in preventing armed conflict requires a comprehensive approach involving all the institutions of the United Nations, the Member States, the regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society and business circles. With this as a premise, I would like to highlight the points that, in the opinion of my delegation, and in the context of today's debate, deserve particular attention.

First, following the Secretary-General's lead, I would like to emphasize that the Security Council, according to the Charter of the United Nations, has a

key role to play in preventing conflict. This is why my delegation encourages the Secretary-General in his intention, inter alia, to periodically provide the Security Council with regional and subregional reports on threats to peace and international security, focusing in particular on cross-border problems that might threaten peace and international security, such as illicit trafficking in arms and natural resources, refugees, mercenaries and irregular forces, and the impact of such phenomena on security.

We must be equally supportive of the Secretary-General's recommendation encouraging the Council to consider innovative mechanisms to discuss on a more regular basis the issue of prevention.

In the same vein, my delegation fully supports recommendation 4 of the Secretary-General's report, which proposes that the Economic and Social Council, during its annual substantive session, conduct a high-level debate on the elimination of the root causes of conflict and the role of development in promoting long-term conflict prevention.

My second comment bears on the required cooperation between the United Nations and external actors, in particular regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society and business circles. Here, the Secretary-General's report aptly reminds us that for some years now some regional organizations have possessed new institutional capacities for early warning and conflict prevention. This is the case with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to mention only two. They have set up their own mechanisms for the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts. In 1999, in the framework of effective conflict prevention, ECOWAS created a monitoring system for peace and subregional security. This system is called the early warning system or, simply, "the system". This system includes a monitoring and follow-up centre based at the ECOWAS secretariat headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria. Its mission is to establish cooperative links between the United Nations, the OAU, research centres and any other relevant international, regional and subregional organization. The system also involves monitoring and follow-up zones for the subregion. Thus, on the basis of proximity, ease of communication and effectiveness, the member States of ECOWAS have set up four monitoring and follow-up zones under the auspices of offices opened at Banjul, Ouagadougou, Monrovia and Cotonou.

But the political will of the authorities of the continent and of the West African subregion requires the support and assistance of the international community. This is why my delegation supports the Secretary-General's recommendation number 26, which calls on Member States to support the follow-up processes launched by the Third and Fourth High-level United Nations-Regional Organizations Meetings to improve conflict prevention and peace-building, and to provide increased resources for developing regional capacities in this field.

On this occasion I would like to reiterate Mali's support for the Secretary-General's recommendation, based on the report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on West Africa, regarding the establishment of a United Nations office in West Africa that could reinforce the organization's capacity for early warning, conflict prevention, peace-building, reporting and policy development, as well as enhance cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States and other subregional organizations.

My third and last comment is to draw attention to the fact that if we wish to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, we must combat the pathetic spectacle of child soldiers. My delegation therefore suggests that we draft a more restrictive set of international provisions in this regard. We invite Member States to sign and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted in May 2000. In this context we wish to restate Mali's full support for the proposals made by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh at the second Security Council summit, on 7 September 2000, relating to the creation of areas free of child soldiers in conflict-prone areas.

In conclusion, we would like to express our agreement with the Secretary-General's statement that the time has come to intensify our efforts in order to progress from a culture of reaction towards a culture of prevention. The prevention of violent conflict is surely less costly than post-conflict remedy. And surely the international community is already well enough informed about certain latent crises throughout the world. What we have to do is act, and act now.

The President: I thank the representative of Mali for his kind words addressed to me, to our Permanent Representative, Mr. Chowdhury, and to my country.

Mr. Neewoor (Mauritius): It is a great honour to have you, Mr. Foreign Minister, preside over our open debate today on the prevention of armed conflict, which is a subject of highest concern to all of us in the United Nations. We thank Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury for holding this open discussion on this important subject today. We also thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for providing us with a very comprehensive and highly imaginative report on the subject. The report not only addresses the subject in a very analytical way, but more importantly, makes a number of recommendations which merit serious consideration by both the Security Council and the General Assembly.

The Secretary-General has made the following extremely important assertions at the very outset of his report. First of all, there is a need to move the United Nations from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. Secondly, we must now move from the rhetoric of prevention to the full implementation stage. My delegation concurs fully with these assertions. The nature and characteristics of conflicts have changed over the years since the United Nations was founded over half a century ago. Conflicts in our times are largely within States rather than between States, and these have to be dealt with differently from the ways in which conflicts between States are addressed under the United Nations Charter.

We were privileged to take part in the recent Security Council missions to the Congo and the Great Lakes region, as well as the mission to Kosovo last week under the leadership of Ambassador Chowdhury. We had the opportunity to have a closer look at the conflicts which afflict these areas, and we have come back convinced, more than ever before, that these conflicts would have been avoidable through timely action at the national level, with the support of the international community. We believe that the same is true in respect of most civil conflicts. We share the view of the Secretary-General that the primary responsibility for conflict prevention rests with national Governments.

Let us see what the root causes of civil conflicts are. In our view, the seeds of civil strife can invariably be found in places where Governments lack legitimacy, where governance is weak or unrepresentative, where irrational values such as fundamentalism, racism, tribalism, ethnic discrimination, social injustice, and violation of human rights are practised officially or unofficially. These are matters which concern the national Governments themselves, and the international community can reasonably expect responsible Governments to address such issues internally in a manner that has the general support of the people.

The seeds of conflict also lie in poverty, underdevelopment and conditions of economic and social inequality. These problems are normally difficult to deal with at the national level alone. International and United Nations support are crucial in terms of the resources and know-how needed for the development of economic and social infrastructures that help alleviate the problem of unemployment as well. We must not forget that underdevelopment tends to become the breeding ground for social frustration, which culminates in armed struggles and uncontrolled violence.

I shall now make some observations on the recommendations of the Secretary-General on the prevention of conflict.

With regard to early warning systems, the Secretary-General has referred on a number of occasions in his report to the various possibilities of obtaining early warning information from United Nations agencies. While the collection of such information is no doubt helpful, it is equally important that proper strategies be developed within the United Nations system with a view to addressing the issue at its embryonic stage so as to avoid the occurrence of indiscriminate violence prior to any action being taken by the United Nations.

In connection with preventive deployment operations, we welcome the proposal of the Secretary-General in favour of a United Nations preventive deployment operation as a symbol of the international community's interest and as a source of leverage to promote peace and stability. Such deployment as the Secretary-General suggests may make a crucial contribution, as opposed to the traditional peacekeeping mission, which is not present when the conflict erupts and cannot therefore save lives and promote stability in the initial stages of an armed conflict. It is only through comprehensive and coherent conflict prevention strategies that the greatest potential for promoting peace can be achieved and a suitable environment for sustainable development can be created.

As part of the Secretary-General's strategy to prevent armed conflicts, my delegation fully subscribes to the idea of fielding fact-finding missions, such as the inter-agency mission that visited several countries in West Africa recently. The report of the mission provides an integrated approach to the political, economic, social and humanitarian problems existing in the countries visited. It is encouraging to note that the mission has come up with concrete recommendations to address the problems faced by countries of the region in a comprehensive manner. Such missions should be encouraged to visit regions affected by underdevelopment, where the potential for armed conflicts to occur might remain high.

As to the role of the Economic and Social Council in conflict prevention, as an integrated approach aimed at achieving sustainable peace and preventing armed conflicts, we fully concur with the Secretary-General that a future high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council's annual meeting be devoted to the question of addressing the root causes of conflict and the role of development in promoting long-term conflict prevention. A greater involvement of the Economic and Social Council in areas related to the elimination of the root causes of conflict should be encouraged. The assessment mission of the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, of which I had the privilege to be a member, provided first-hand information on the efforts undertaken to address the core issues that could assist in establishing lasting peace in Haiti.

The importance of the role of regional organizations in conflict prevention has been reiterated on several occasions in this Chamber. We commend the positive role played by regional and subregional organizations, such as the Organization of African Unity, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community, in their efforts to prevent armed conflicts. The early warning stations established by ECOWAS in West Africa provide an excellent example of the determination of the subregional organization to address the issue of armed conflict at the earliest stage of its occurrence. More resources, technical and material alike, should be made available to regional organizations in their endeavours to prevent armed conflict. The moratorium on arms imposed by ECOWAS serves as another example of the efforts to curb armed conflicts in Africa.

It is undeniable that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons has, over the past decade, been a major cause of concern in various conflict-prone regions. Measures to prevent the misuse and illicit transfer of small arms will inevitably contribute to the prevention of conflicts. Disarmament should be an ongoing process, particularly in conflict-prone societies. We look forward to the adoption of a comprehensive programme of action to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons during the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects next month. My delegation also fully supports programmes, such as "weapons for development", which are aimed at the retrieval and collection of illegal weapons in exchange for community-based development incentives. These programmes have been successful in some regions and should be encouraged on a wider scale.

As regards the role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts, the Secretary-General reminds the Council that, according to Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter:

> "The Security Council may investigate any dispute, or any situation which might lead to international friction or give rise to a dispute".

The Secretary-General also draws attention to the fact that the Security Council normally becomes involved only when violence has already occurred on a large scale. It is time that the Security Council pay attention to the comments of the Secretary-General and dedicate itself to playing a more constructive role in the prevention of armed conflicts. In this regard, we welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General to submit periodic regional or subregional reports to the Security Council on threats to international peace and security.

My delegation commends the Secretary-General for the important role he plays through quiet diplomacy and the use of his good offices in the prevention of armed conflicts. There is no doubt that he has achieved very positive results. My delegation encourages him in his efforts and supports his actions for the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts wherever they occur.

Finally, my delegation fully supports the 10 principles laid down in the Secretary-General's report, which are aimed at intensifying the efforts of the United Nations to move from a culture of reaction to a

culture of prevention. My delegation, however, wishes to highlight the following principle:

> "Conflict prevention and sustainable and equitable development are mutually reinforcing activities. An investment in national and international efforts for conflict prevention must be seen as a simultaneous investment in sustainable development since the latter can best take place in an environment of sustainable peace." (*S/2001/574, para. 169*)

This principle, according to my delegation, remains at the core of our efforts in the prevention of conflicts.

The President: I thank the representative of Mauritius for his kind words addressed to me and to Mr. Chowdhury.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh.

The report submitted by the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict has received my Government's very high appreciation. We agree with the Deputy Secretary-General that this first-ever report should provide the basis for an in-depth discussion here at the Council and throughout the United Nations system.

The deliberations at our meeting today will provide necessary political direction and inputs for Council action. In the General Assembly, we shall, of course, give further consideration to the observations and recommendations of the report for a United Nations system-wide approach to conflict prevention. The role of the Bretton Woods institutions would be crucial. Our debate here should also aim at encouraging the support of the regional organizations and arrangements, the non-governmental organizations and the private sector. I wish to underline three points.

First, as to the question of responsibility, the Security Council must assume its primary responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security. This will mean resolute action to prevent threats to peace, breaches of peace and acts of aggression. This will also mean timely and effective intervention to prevent genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. We must not witness another preventable genocide, such as that in Rwanda, or another preventable massacre, such as that in Srebrenica.

During our debate on humanitarian aspects of issues before the Council, in March 2000, we put emphasis on human security. The United Nations was established in the name of the people. Their security should be prime in our consideration when we deal with war and peace.

At the Council summit last year, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hisaka, said that conflict prevention is a political, economic, humanitarian, and moral imperative. It is political, because conflicts disrupt inter-State relations, adversely, affecting the climate of cooperation at regional and international levels. It is economic, because the cost of war is so enormous for the international community. The Carnegie Commission report estimated the cost of the seven major conflicts of the 1990s at $200 billion. It is humanitarian and moral, because conflicts result in humanitarian disasters in the form of death and destruction, mass killings, gross violation of human rights and humanitarian law, and untold suffering for men, women, and children.

Second is the question of political will. The effective discharge of the Council's responsibilities will require political will on the part of Member States. They will have to accept human and material sacrifices. They should be prepared to support the actions of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and security. Providing support for the peace and security mission of the United Nations is a Charter obligation, not charity. In a globalizing world, as the Secretary-General stresses in paragraph 164 of his report, "collective interest is the national interest". In order to be effective, we agree that the Council must be able to make decisions on the basis of what the situation requires — not on the basis of what some members are willing to support.

Thirdly, we should consider the sources of conflict. The key to prevention lies in addressing the sources or root causes of conflicts. The April 1998 report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict in Africa identified the major sources of conflicts. In his analysis, the sources of many of the conflicts on the continent include colonial and cold-war legacies. It is hence a natural conclusion that special responsibility has to be assumed by those concerned. They can play a crucial role in helping them address the political, economic, and social challenges in these societies.

A related aspect is the absence of democratic institutions. Autocratic regimes, the politicization of ethnicity, denial of fundamental freedoms and human rights, and monopolization of political power and national resources are often at the root of conflicts. These factors have resulted in the failure of States. At the Council summit last year, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called for international protection of democracy, because we share the conviction that democracy, rule of law, human rights, and good governance constitute the foundation of durable peace.

The Secretary-General underlines that conflict prevention and sustainable development are mutually reinforcing. Our common understanding of this complementarity will be crucial for a United Nations system-wide comprehensive approach to conflict prevention.

The various plans and programmes of action adopted in the 1990s cycle of international conferences elaborate the agenda for our common humanity. Unfortunately, the review conferences reveal a serious gap between commitment and action. The desired progress in their implementation would have covered a lot of ground towards the prevention of armed conflicts. Translating words into deeds would have made the difference. In many cases, it will make the difference between war and peace.

Mr. Duval (Canada) (*spoke in French*): We welcome your presence, Mr. Foreign Minister, at this important debate. Canada welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict, introduced this morning by the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Louise Fréchette, this morning. It is a thorough and well-crafted report that makes clear the progress that has been achieved in developing our Organization's capacity to prevent armed conflict, while also providing practical recommendations on how that capacity can be further enhanced. We will participate wholeheartedly in efforts to give life to the report.

As the Secretary-General states, conflict prevention is at the moral heart of the mandate of the United Nations, as expressed in the Charter and throughout more than 55 years of efforts to maintain international peace and security for the people of the whole world. Member States have primary responsibility for preventing violent conflict, and they have a key role to play in strengthening our collective capacity to avoid future tragedies like those in Rwanda and Srebrenica.

Preventing the outbreak and escalation of armed conflict requires action by both the General Assembly and the Security Council. We must identify ways for these two organs better to coordinate their efforts in this area. We should not lose time to jurisdictional arguments. There is urgent work to be done by both bodies.

Other actors, such as regional organizations, the international financial institutions and civil society, also have an important role to play in supporting the efforts of Member States to strengthen their capacity to respond to factors such as exclusion and inequality, which, if left unchecked, can spark violent confrontations.

Appropriately, the report also recognizes the positive role the private sector can play in promoting conflict prevention and sustainable human development. Corporate and other non-State actors can prolong and intensify war by, for example, engaging in illicit trade in natural resources. But they can also play a positive role and help stave off conflict by, for example, providing employment to young people who might otherwise be tempted to take up arms. Canada supports further study into the positive roles the private sector can play in vulnerable conflict-prone areas, including through conflict prevention activities such as early warning and post-conflict reconstruction.

Effective conflict prevention is as much an issue of economics and governance as it is of diplomacy. It requires engagement over the long term, beginning with the moment when the possibility of armed conflict appears and continuing throughout the period when the embers of conflict risk being reignited. Emergency assistance, reconstruction and peace-building all form part of conflict prevention.

(*spoke in English*)

Next month, Member States will have an opportunity to achieve real progress in an area vital to the prevention and mitigation of armed conflict: controlling the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We share the Secretary-General's conviction that small arms proliferation is not simply a security issue but also an issue of human rights and development, and we agree that measures to address

the demand for, and misuse of, small arms and light weapons are necessary to prevent armed conflict.

We therefore support a comprehensive approach to the July 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It is essential that there be broad support among Member States for practical disarmament measures. Canada echoes the call for greater participation by Member States in disarmament-related early warning and transparency mechanisms as well as for the inclusion of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration provisions in the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping and peace-building operations, where appropriate. It is particularly important that these recommendations are reflected in the programme for action of the July 2001 United Nations Conference.

The Secretary-General's report also underscores the need for a gender-sensitive approach to conflict prevention and peace-building efforts on the part of the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole. Canada is firmly committed to the implementation of the Security Council's landmark resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. We also strongly agree that a gender-sensitive approach, with the full and equal participation of women in the planning and implementation of peace support operations, will contribute to more effective United Nations missions.

A gender-sensitive approach to peace support operations requires appropriate training. Over the past two years, Canada and the United Kingdom have developed a Gender Training Initiative — GTI — for military and civilian personnel involved in peace support operations. The materials continue to be a work in progress and continue to be available to the United Nations and Member States.

Canada also recognizes the importance of addressing the situation of war-affected children. Children are not only victims in today's conflicts but, sometimes, are also perpetrators of violence. The International Conference on War-Affected Children held last September in Winnipeg, Canada, produced an agenda for war-affected children that outlines priorities for international action. Many of these are reflected in this report of the Secretary-General. The General Assembly special session on children to be held in September 2001 provides another opportunity to work towards broadly defined conflict prevention.

Finally, Canada strongly supports the suggestion by the President of the General Assembly that following the Assembly's discussion of this report next month, a short procedural resolution be adopted forwarding the report to all relevant organs within the United Nations system and other relevant actors for their consideration and further recommendations. These bodies should also be invited to report back to the Assembly during its fifty-sixth session, at which time the Assembly could consider the report and all recommendations in a comprehensive manner.

We support generally the recommendations made by the Secretary-General and look forward to discussing them more fully at the time of the General Assembly debate.

The President: There are a number of speakers remaining on my list. In view of the lateness of the hour, and with the concurrence of the members of the Council, I intend to suspend the meeting now and to resume it at 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.15 p.m.